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there would be much more gradation and subtle change and mystery in the lines, which is only to be got by the most complete and thorough drawing. Mr. Richards's work often errs in this respect, and gives foundation for the popular outcry that the works of the new school are hard and flat. They ought not to be hard nor flat, and if each little leaf, or twig, or whatever it might be, were completely drawn, with all its variety and gradation of light, shade and color, it would not be flat nor hard, but would be just like nature. Some of the little openings, where you can look between the large leaves, are sadly wanting in fulness and mystery. Nature never looks as though she had been covered all over with Vandyke brown, and a few little leaves put on afterward, but all such little nooks in her greenery are full, and deep, and rich. There is a never-ending profusion and change. All these faults Mr. Pattison can overcome; we feel sure he will overcome them. He only needs more practice in drawing in black and white. Draw! draw! draw! It is what we all need. We can never do too much of it. To make ourselves perfect masters of form in black and white, is what everybody aspiring to artistic honor should make his first and exclusive ambition. All our young men need it, and the old men need it ten times more. The summer is almost here, and the trees are putting on their rich garments; the mulleins are growing tall, and stout, and soft, and there is work before Mr. Pattison. We wish him good subjects, and good weather, and sensible people to appreciate the results of his study. We shall expect to see some excellent works from his pencil in the fall, and, above all, one or two very thorough drawings in black and white. If it is only a few leaves, or a single weed, done as thoroughly as possible, he will find his knowledge of nature's gradation and mystery, and his

power of expressing it, greatly increased by this sort of practice.

THE SINGERS, THE LISTENERS, Nos. 210, 204, AND THE CIRCASSIAN, No. 226—
WM. M. HUNT.

It is a long time since Mr. Hunt has contributed to the Academy Exhibition. We do not quite like to think how many years it must be since everybody, almost, was admiring his "Marguerite." We had hoped that his withdrawing himself meant study, practice, growth; and that, when he did send us something, it would explain and justify his long seclusion. But neither of these three pictures shows either study or growth. The sentiment of the "Marguerite" degenerates in "The Singers" and "The Listeners" into mere sentimentality; the color has become more bricky and clayey; and what was allowed to pass in his earlier work as a youthful imitation of Couture, excusable as the natural, involuntary homage paid by a student to his master, has become in these later pictures nothing less than an abject, and we fear, irredeemable slavery.

What is the reason that we have so often to record and lament this falling off in our artists from the promise, sometimes from the achieved excellence, of their earlier works? Is it something in our society; or, is it that art is a forced product, any way, among us, and dies down after a short season of unnatural growth, because there is no deepness of earth? Or is it, simply, because art is long, and certain artists want to make it short; that it is hard, and they want to make it easy; that it is serious, and they find serious art unremunerative? In many cases it may be owing to one or all of these causes; but, it is easy to imagine instances where the failure must be accounted for in other ways. A man may believe art to be long, difficult, and earnest, and may wish to pursue it in that spirit; and yet, the social influences

which surround him may be against him. They may be frivolous, or mercenary, or, as bad as either, dilettante, æsthetic, and so over-refined as to enervate and relax the intellect, to drive a man into affectation and morbid ways of looking at life.

Some fatal influence, we do not pretend to know what, is depriving us of whatever simplicity, tenderness, grace, may have been promised by Mr. Hunt's earlier work. Surely, there is nothing of either of these in the two smaller pictures on these walls. What can a healthy, simple-hearted, unaffected American find to enjoy in these figures? We should like to know what they are doing? How comes that boy to have on that queer ecclesiastical-looking dressing-gown, with the embroidered shirt underneath? Is he an acolyte, or only playing at being one? And, if he is one, on what occasion do altar-boys sing out of the same book with mere lay girls? "The Listeners" is a companion to this puzzling picture. Where are these young women? What are they doing? Why does one of them betray so much emotion at what does not in the least affect the other? And what is the matter with that other's eyes? There is no speculation in them, although they excite a little in us.

Now we see, as plainly as the artist would have us, what he did mean to convey by these pictures. Two choir-children are singing, and two of the congregation are listening; that is all, and that would have been quite enough for a subject if it had been truly conceived, carefully studied and thought out, and well painted. Della Robbia and Van Eyck have given us singers and players in a bas-relief and paintings that the world loves and cherishes; but it does not give its love, nor bestow its cherishing on unreal, crude and slovenly workmanship. Mr. Hunt did not care enough about his pictures to make them

tell any intelligible story, in the first place, or indicate any possible circumstances. Then, he did not think it worth his while to trouble himself as to detail. How altar-boys in the Romish church are dressed, and whether they ever sing with the girls of the congregation, were things of no importance; to have admitted any limitation to his right of representing affairs as he took the whim, would have been to clip the wings of poetry, forsooth; to rein in imagination, and to interfere with effects of color, tone and other things which are on no account to be interfered with! Finally, when it comes to the painting, can any one look at either of these three pictures and not confess that Mr. Hunt has turned his back deliberately on nature? Is this flesh-color? Did he ever see such eyes in any created thing higher than a fish? What are these people's dresses made of? Is the Circassian's scarf made of his skin? Or, is his skin made of his scarf? Look at the architecture of the two smaller pictures. Is it wood or stone? and, if we cease wondering how it was induced to get built, can we cease wondering why it holds together? And when you look at the lectern the two girls are standing at, remember the beautiful one in Van Eyck's "Singing Angels," and the many other beautiful ones in old Italian pictures, and see how men work when they are in earnest and love their work. But, really, we suppose it was not expected that these pictures would be thought worth taking to pieces, and in truth they are not. But the hand that painted "Marguerite," might paint pictures that would be.

COMING NIGHT, No. 10, THE FADED FLOWER, No. 259—EUGENE BENSON.

Mr. Benson's work, also, shows, this year, no step in advance. On the contrary, it has gone many steps backward.